

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 ATHENS 08060 061653Z

53

ACTION L-03

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FM AMEMBASSY ATHENS

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INFO JCS WASHDC PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY ANKARA PRIORITY

USMISSION NATO PRIORITY

USNMR SHAPE PRIORITY

USDELMC PRIORITY

USCINCEUR PRIORITY

CINCUSNAVEUR PRIORITY

CINCUSAFE RAMSTEIN PRIORITY

USDOCOSOUTH NAPLES PRIORITY

DIRNSA PRIORITY

S E C R E T ATHENS 8060

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, PFOR, GR, US

SUBJECT: US-GREEK BASE NEGOTIATIONS: TIMETABLE FOR CONCLUSION

REF: (A) ATHENS 7821 (DTG 021841Z AUG 76), (B) STATE 194699

(DTG 052214Z AUG 76)

1. WHILE WE HAVE BEEN PUSHING GREEKS TO CONCLUDE NEGOTIATIONS BY AUGUST 14, AND WILL CONTINUE TO DO SO, THERE CAN BE NO CERTAINTY THAT REMAINING ISSUES WILL IN FACT BE RESOLVED BY THAT TIME. WE SHOULD THEREFORE HAVE CLEARLY IN MIND HOW WE WISH TO ORGANIZE OUR CALENDAR IF DISCUSSIONS CONTINUE AFTER AUGUST 14. DURING INFORMAL MEETING TODAY, CALOGERAS INDICATED TO STEARNS THAT GREEK SIDE WAS DUBIOUS THAT ALL DETAILS COULD BE COMPLETED TO PERMIT INITIALING

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 ATHENS 08060 061653Z

OF AGREEMENTS BY END OF NEXT WEEK. IN THAT EVENT, HE

SAID, STRONG PREFERENCE OF GREEK DELEGATION WOULD BE TO BREAK FOR TWO OR THREE WEEKS TO PERMIT RESULTS OF CURRENT ROUND TO BE DIGESTED. TWO SIDES COULD THEN RESUME DISCUSSIONS IN ATHENS SOMETIME IN THE FIRST WEEK OF SEPTEMBER WITH EXPECTATION OF COMPLETING AND INITIALING THE ACCORDS WITHIN ONE WEEK TO TEN DAYS.

2. STEARNS SAID THAT THIS WAS NOT AT ALL THE WAY WE VISUALIZED THE TIMETABLE FOR COMPLETING NEGOTIATIONS. HE CONTINUED TO BELIEVE THAT IT WAS PERFECTLY POSSIBLE TO COMPLETE NEGOTIATIONS NEXT WEEK. IF THIS WAS NOT POSSIBLE HOWEVER HE BELIEVED THAT WASHINGTON WOULD PREFER TO CONTINUE DISCUSSIONS IN ATHENS WITHOUT INTERRUPTION, OR AT LEAST WITH A PAUSE OF NO MORE THAN THREE OR FOUR DAYS OVER THE LONG GREEK HOLIDAY WEEKEND AUGUST 14-16. HE REMINDED CALOGERAS THAT THE AMERICAN SIDE WAS DETERMINED TO COMPLETE NEGOTIATIONS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE AND THAT WE HAD BEEN ASSURED BY THE MOST SENIOR LEVELS OF THE GREEK GOVERNMENT THAT GREECE SHARED THIS OBJECTIVE. TO SUSPEND DISCUSSIONS IN THE LAST TWO WEEKS OF AGUST WOULD MEAN THAT INITIALING COULD NOT TAKE PLACE BEFORE THE FIRST OR SECOND WEEK OF SEPTEMBER AND SIGNATURE OF THE AGREEMENTS COULD NOT POSSIBLY OCCUR UNTIL THE LATTER PART OF SEPTEMBER. THIS WOULD NOT PROVIDE ANY OPPORTUNITY FOR CONGRESS TO STUDY AND HOPEFULLY TO APPROVE THE AGREEMENTS BEFORE RECESSING ON OCTOBER 2.

3. CALOGERAS SAID THAT HE WAS NOT REPEAT NOT MAKING A FORMAL PROPOSAL TO SUSPEND DISCUSSION IN THE SECOND TWO WEEKS OF AUGUST, BUT HAD GENUINE DOUBTS THAT CONTINUING NEGOTIATIONS WITHOUT INTERRUPTION WOULD PRODUCE THE DESIRED RESULT. HE ASKED STEARNS TO OBTAIN WASHINGTON'S REACTION TO HIS SUGGESTION AND SEE WHETHER THERE WAS ANY POSSIBILITY OF BREAKING DISCUSSIONS TEMPORARILY AT THE END OF NEXT WEEK. STEARNS SAID THAT HE WOULD DO SO BUT CONTINUED TO BELIEVE THAT THE REMAINING ISSUES COULD BE RESOLVED NEXT WEEK IF BOTH SIDES WERE PREPARED TO MAKE A SERIOUS EFFORT TO DO SO.

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 ATHENS 08060 061653Z

4. IN THE LATTER CONNECTION, STEARNS ASKED WHETHER CALOGERAS HAD RECEIVED GUIDANCE FROM BITSIOS ON THE POINTS WHICH STEARNS HAD RAISED ON AUGUST 2. CALOGERAS SAID THAT HE HAD NOT REPEAT NOT SUCCEEDED IN DOING TO AS YET BUT THAT HE CONTINUED TO BELIEVE THAT COST-SHARING DISCUSSIONS COULD BE DEFERRED UNTIL AFTER SIGNATURE OF THE AGREEMENTS AND THAT THE QUESTIONS

OF RESIDUAL VALUE WOULD BE RESOLVED ALONG THE LINES OF THE FORMULA PROPOSED BY STEARNS. THE QUESTION OF GENERAL ACCESS WAS MORE DIFFICULT AND HE WAS UNWILLING TO HAZARD A GUESS AS TO WHAT BITSIOS' REACTION WOULD BE TO OUR LATEST PROPOSAL (REFTEL A). STEARNS NOTED THAT IN THE HELLENIKON SUBGROUP A NEW PROBLEM HAD EMERGED IN THE FORM OF THE GREEK DELEGATION'S INSISTENCE THAT A CEILING BE PLACED OVER NUMBERS AND SORTIES OF US AIRLIFT AIRCRAFT. STEARNS POINTED OUT THAT HELLENIKON WAS IN LARGE PART OF TRANSIT POINT FOR US AIRCRAFT PROCEEDING TO THIRD COUNTRIES AND THAT THE REQUIREMENTS VARIED, OFTEN UNPREDICTABLY. THE NATURE OF OUR UTILIZATION OF HELLENIKON WAS ENTIRELY DIFFERENT FROM THE NATURE OF UTILIZATION OF SOUDA. IT WOULD BE UNREALISTIC TO EXPECT US TO ACCEPT A CEILING OVER OUR REQUIREMENTS AND STEARNS HOPED THAT THE GREEKS WOULD RELAX THEIR POSITION ON THIS POINT.

5. CALOGERAS SAID THAT IT WAS IMPORTANT FOR THE GREEK GOVERNMENT TO DEMONSTRATE THAT US UTILIZATION OF HELLENIKON HAD SPECIFIC LIMITS AND COULD BE CONTROLLED BY GREEK AUTHORITIES. THERE WERE, HE ARGUES, PRACTICAL AS WELL AS POLITICAL JUSTIFICATIONS FOR THIS SINCE COMMERCIAL UTILIZATION OF HELLENIKON WAS HEAVY AND WAS INCREASING. STEARNS REPEATED THAT A CEILING WOULD BE UNREALISTIC AND UNWORKABLE. HE SUGGESTED THAT THE WORKING GROUP ON HELLENIKON EXPLORE INFORMALLY WORDING WHICH WOULD REFER TO CONTINUING US OPERATIONS "AT PRESENT RATES OF UTILIZATION" WITH SOME PROVISION FOR CONSULTATION BETWEEN THE PARTIES IF UTILIZATION SIGNIFICANTLY ABOVE OR BELOW PRESENT RATES WAS DESIRED BY EITHER PARTY IN EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES. CALOGERAS AGREED THIS APPROACH WAS WORTH EXPLORING AND SAID THAT
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 04 ATHENS 08060 061653Z

HE WOULD SO INSTRUCT MEMBERS OF THE GREEK SUBGROUP ON HELLENIKON.

6. COMMENT: WE WOULD APPRECIATE RECEIVING THE VIEWS OF WASHINGTON AGENCIES BOTH ON THE SUGGESTION OF CALOGERAS THAT DISCUSSIONS BE SUSPENDED TEMPORARILY AT THE END OF NEXT WEEK AND ON OVERALL CONSIDERATIONS OF TIMING WITH RESPECT TO THE INITIALING AND SIGNATURE OF THE FINAL ACCORDS.
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